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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE REMOVAL AND PREVENTION  
EPA CONTRACT 68-01-6669

Mr. Robert Bowden, Chief  
Spill Response Section  
Environmental Protection Agency  
536 South Clark Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60605

July 31, 1984

TAT-05-F-00377

Reference: Chicago Police Cyanide Emergency  
TDD# 5-8407-08

Dear Mr. Bowden:

On July 24, 1984, TAT members Faryan and Loch responded to an emergency reported to the U.S. EPA by the Chicago Bomb and Arson Squad at the Chicago Police Evidence and Recovery Room at 2652 S. California, Chicago, Illinois. The TAT arrived on site and met with Lieutenant Joe Shields, Supervisor of the Evidence and Recovery Room. Lieutenant Shields informed TAT that a bag labeled "Hazardous Substance" had been stored in the Evidence and Recovery Room and that the bag was believed to contain cyanide.

TAT entered the room that contained the hazardous substance and took Draeger readings; however, no readings were detected. As the bag was visually inspected, a sprayer equipped with a manual pump and cannister made of cardboard along with several glass jars were observed in the bag.

The contents of the bag were screened using a cyanide Draeger tube which was placed directly into the bag. The Draeger tube, which was calibrated for 20 ppm of cyanide using 10 pumps, was completely saturated after one pump. At this time, TAT telephoned these results to Kurt Stimpson, TAT Leader. TAT notified the U.S. EPA Spills Response Branch who then activated the Emergency Response Cleanup Services (ERCS). Steve Browning, On-Scene Coordinator (U.S. EPA), was informed and Mid-America Environmental Services was contracted to remove the material.

**Roy F. Weston, Inc.**

**SPILL PREVENTION & EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION**

In Association with Jacobs Engineering Group Inc., Tetra Tech, Inc., and ICF Incorporated

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The hazardous material was then placed in a garbage bag, sealed with tape, and moved into a 15 gallon plastic drum which was covered with a lid. TAT monitored the air in the room using hydrogen cyanide draeger tubes; again, no concentrations were detected using this method.

Steve Browning (U.S. EPA) and Hank Mendoza (Mid-America Environmental Services) arrived and were briefed by the TAT. Mr. Mendoza monitored the room using a monotox unit specific for hydrogen cyanide that was set to sound an alarm above 10 ppm; no hydrogen cyanide was detected. The drum was placed in a plastic bag, sealed in a 85 gallon overpack and moved to a step van for transport to Mid-America's facility in Riverdale, Illinois.

On July 25, 1984, Mid-America employees opened the drums to inspect the contents and to take a grab sample of the material. The contents were a sprayer and cannister with a bag containing a fine white powder substance and broken glass. A sample was taken and sent to Gulf Coast labs in Park Forest South, Illinois, for analysis.

Results of the analysis indicated the material contained 85 ppm of total cyanide. The material was thought to be a commercial rodent killer which was sprayed from the pump unit.



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Mr. Mendoza notified OSC Steve Browning of the analytical results and discussed disposal options. Mr. Browning agreed that the material could be deposited in the garbage due to the quantity of waste (<1 lb), and the low concentration of cyanide.

Very truly ours,

ROY F. WESTON, INC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Steven F. Faryan".

Steve Faryan  
Project Chemist

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mike Loch".

Mike Loch  
Project Engineer

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kurt S. Stimpson".

Kurt S. Stimpson  
Technical Assistance Team  
Leader, Region V

SF:ap